INTERMOUNTAIN STATION
Central Reference File
No. 0.73

RESEARCH NOTE

Northern Rocky Mountain Forest & Range Experiment Station

Missoula, Montana

FOREST SERVICE
RECEIVED
JAN 15 1941
RESEARCH

No. 12 January 10, 1941

Christmas Tree Production in Western Montana in 1940 a/

A new peak was attained in Christmas tree cutting in western Montana with an estimated production for 1940 of 2,338,350 trees compared with 1,967,350 in 1939, the previous banner year. The principal producing areas were Lincoln County which contributed 1,276,500 trees, Flathead County with 694,450, and Missoula County with 245,000. The leading shipping point was Eureka, in Lincoln County, from which 187 carloads originated. Eureka has been called the "Christmas tree capital of the world," and it is probably true that the title is deserved.

Practically all of the trees shipped from the State were Douglas-fir. Shipments went to all parts of the United States but the bulk found markets in the Middle West. Of the trees produced in western Montana, 84 percent came from private lands, 12 percent from national forests, and 4 percent from State of Montana forests. The average stumpage price paid for trees from national forests was 2.8 cents each, and for trees from State of Montana forests, 3.4 cents each. Prices paid for trees cut from private lands varied greatly and no average is available.

Although no one knows the exact number of Christmas trees used in the United States, an estimate of 12,000,000 for 1940 would not miss the mark widely. If the estimate is correct, Montana's production for 1940 amounts to one fifth of the national consumption.

Further details concerning the origin of trees in western Montana are given in the attached table. Similar statistics for 1939 are available upon request.

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a/ Prepared by E. F. Rapraeger, Division of Forest Products.

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Shipments of Christmas Trees from Western Montana in 1940

County	Railroad Shipments 1/								Truck shipments 2/	All shipments
	Great Northern		Northern Pacific		C.M.St.P.& P.		Total			
	Carloads	Trees	Carloads	Trees	Carloads	Trees	Carloads	Trees	Trees	Trees
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Flathead	136	646,000	-	-	-	-	136	646,000	48,450	694,450
Granite	-	-	4	19,000	-	-	4	19,000	1,400	20,400
Lake	-	-	8	38,000	-	-	8	38,000	2,700	40,700
Lincoln	250	1,187,500	-	-	-	-	250	1,187,500	89,000	1,276,500
Mineral	-	-	-	-	2	9,500	2	9,500	700	10,200
Missoula	-	-	9	42,750	39	185,250	48	228,000	17,000	245,000
Ravalli	-	-	3	14,250	-	-	3	14,250	1,100	15,350
Sanders	-	-	7	33,250	-	-	7	33,250	2,500	35,750
Total	386	1,833,500	31	147,250	41	194,750	458	2,175,500	162,850	2,338,350 3/

1/ Origin of trees is as follows, by counties and shipping stations: Flathead County: Kalispell, 135 cars; Whitefish, 1 car. Granite County: Drummond, 4 cars. Lake County: Polson, 8 cars. Lincoln County: Eureka, 187 cars; Libby, 32 cars; Fortine, 17 cars; Rexford, 12 cars; Troy, 2 cars. Missoula County: Missoula, 48 cars. Mineral County: Alberton, 2 cars. Ravalli County: Darby, 3 cars. Average number of trees per car is estimated at 4,750.

2/ Truck shipments (162,850 trees) are an estimate.

3/ The origin of the production (2,338,350 trees) is approximately as follows: State of Montana forests, 82,940 trees (4 percent); national forests, 281,980 trees (12 percent); private lands, 1,973,430 trees (84 percent).

The 281,980 trees cut on national forests originated as follows: Bitterroot, 1,172 trees; Cabinet, 338 trees; Flathead, 2,769 trees; Kootenai, 243,017 trees; Lolo, 34,684 trees. The average stumpage price received for these trees was 2.8 cents each. The average price received by the State of Montana for trees cut from State forests was 3.4 cents each.